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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 003168

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/23/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [CH](#) [TW](#) [NL](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: DUTCH MFA ON EU'S CHINA ARMS EMBARGO

REF: SECSTATE 346965

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Nathaniel Dean for reasons 1.
5 (b and d)

(C) PolOff delivered reftel demarche to Dutch MFA Arms Transfer Policy Office Deputy Director Alexander Verbeek and Asia Policy Officer Gerbrand Visser on December 23. Verbeek was not surprised by the demarche, acknowledging that the embargo would be discussed in the EU's upcoming January 8 COASI meeting. That said, he emphasized COASI was a forum for "purely technical" discussions, and no decisions would be made until the EU FM's GAERC meeting at the end of January. Verbeek said the GONL position on the embargo is still being formulated, but the Dutch make a clear linkage between the embargo and human rights. He noted that FM Bot had been questioned in parliament recently about the Dutch position with regard to the German-French embargo initiative. According to Verbeek, FM Bot said the embargo should be discussed "within an EU context to see if we still need it," and if not "we should get something back in return." Further, Verbeek noted that a recent parliamentary resolution, which underlined MPs' concerns about China's human rights situation and its aggressive stance towards Taiwan, requested the Dutch government oppose lifting the embargo. This resolution garnered overwhelming support, which makes it difficult for FM Bot to support lifting the embargo unless there is otherwise unanimous support within the EU for such a step. Verbeek stressed the need for any such EU decision to be unanimous, and observed that even if the EU voted to lift the embargo, the EU Code of Conduct on Weapons Exports and its criteria for regional stability make it "in practice impossible" to supply arms to China.

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